

## RUTH 2:14-16

### Being Answered Prayer

There once was a man who was stuck on his rooftop amid a severe flood praying the Lord would help him. Soon a rescuer in a rowboat came by and shouted, “Jump in, I can save you.” The stranded man replied, “No, it’s OK, I’m praying to God, and he is going to save me.” So, the rowboat went on.

Then a motorboat came by. The rescuer shouted, “Jump in, I can save you.” To this the stranded man said, “No thanks, I’m praying to God, and he is going to save me. I have faith.” So, the motorboat went on.

Finally, a helicopter swooped in and the pilot shouted down, “Grab this rope and I will lift you to safety.” To this the stranded man again replied, “No thanks, I’m praying to God, and he is going to save me. I have faith.” So, the helicopter reluctantly flew away.

Eventually, the water rose above the rooftop and the man drowned. While in heaven, the man exclaimed to God, “I had faith in you, yet you still let me drown. I don’t understand why!” To this God replied, “I sent you a rowboat, a motorboat, a helicopter, what more did you expect?”

Previously, Boaz approached Ruth and showed her incredible kindness. He both prayed for her as well as provided for her from his wheat fields. In Ruth 2:12, Boaz prayed that Ruth would find refuge in God’s wings. Now we discover that not only was God going to answer his prayer, but use him as the answer.

In vs. 14, Boaz invites Ruth, an impoverished widow, to sit with him in a place of honor. She not only ate to her full (a rare blessing in her condition of poverty), but had leftovers. One might safely assume they were given to bitter Mara. Finally, something positive is happening to our main characters!

This provisional grace continued well after the meal. Boaz instructed his workers to be generous to Ruth as she gleaned from the field. In fact, Boaz wanted his men to

leave some of the wheat purposefully behind so that she and Naomi would have enough to eat that day. Boaz is openly sacrificing profit for generosity. As a result, his men leave behind an ephah of barley which some suggest equals to nearly 6 gallons of grain which would have been enough food for over a week!

Thus, within a few verses, the Lord answers Boaz's prayer to protect and provide for Ruth and her mother-in-law. Admittedly, we rarely pause to "count our many blessings" let alone "name them one by one." Typically, answered prayer is received with entitlement rather than gratitude. What if we chronicled the many blessings from God and the many ways he has answered our prayers (even when we didn't know what to request)? What sort of list would we come up with daily?

Not only did the Lord answer Boaz's prayer, but he made Boaz the answer to his own prayer! It is rare we consider that the Lord would use us to be such an answer to prayer. What is more incredible is that Boaz does nothing more than basic generosity. He doesn't look for praise or honor but seeks to be consistent with his faith.

Imagine if each of us, living consistent, holy lives, were used by God to answer prayers. It is likely, he is already doing it. When we encourage our coworkers, share our faith with an unbeliever, listen to a friend, give generously to those in need, disciple young Christians, or intercede on someone's behalf, we are often the unknowingly an answer to prayer. What prayers are you answering today?

God graciously hears and answers prayer. One can imagine Ruth walking home with an extra spring in her step. One day she enjoys the first "date" with Boaz and returns home with enough food for her mother-in-law. The next day, she collects enough food for the two of them to eat for at least a week. Answered prayer. That prayer was answered because Boaz was simply being obedient to God. Simple obedience is more glorious than we can ever imagine.